

House Resolution No.

Whereas, on Sunday, March 2, 2003, the congregation and ministers of St. Stephen Baptist Church of Kansas City, Missouri, will observe a special, celebratory service to mark the One Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of their respected, esteemed spiritual organization; and

Whereas, St. Stephen Baptist Church was established by a man of humble beginnings, the Reverend James Wesley Hurse, who went on to become a true pillar in the Kansas City African-American community and President of the National Baptist Convention, and who served as pastor until his death in 1935; and

Whereas, the Reverend James Hurse was followed by an exceptional line of spiritual leaders who include the Reverend Raymond James Jordan, noted for boldly instituting changes to place St. Stephen Baptist Church at the vanguard of community churches and to place the church on firm financial footing, to increase membership, and to plan for physical improvement; the Reverend John Wesley Williams, who brought about remodeling, retiring the mortgage, reorganizing auxiliaries, initiating a scholarship program, and radio broadcasting; the Reverend Mac Charles Jones, who led the congregation into such social justice issues as equality, economic opportunity, self determination, and respect for self and others by embracing the church's logo of "Faith, Love, Purpose"; and the current pastor, the Reverend Eric Duane Belt, who has continued church growth and financial stability, revitalized the music ministry and nursery/youth care, increased member readiness for ministry, encouraged volunteerism, and purchased new church vans, choir robes and office equipment; and

Whereas, St. Stephen Baptist Church has distinguished itself as the worthy host of many important figures in civil rights history, including Marcus Moziah Garvey, Ralph David Abernathy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and as the heartfelt sponsor of the citywide Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday celebration in association with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that we, the members of the Missouri House of Representatives, Ninety-second General Assembly, join unanimously to applaud the stellar record of spiritual and social concerns so broadly developed and followed by the leaders and members of St. Stephen Baptist Church and to convey to all of those involved this legislative body's heartiest congratulations and best wishes as the church celebrates the wonderful occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of its founding; and

Be it further resolved that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of Representatives be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution in honor of the illustrious history and inspiring spiritual service of St. Stephen Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri.

Offered by _____
Representative Sharon Sanders Brooks
District No. 37

I, Catherine L. Hanaway, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ninety-second General Assembly, First Regular Session, do certify that the above is a true and correct copy of House Resolution No. ____, adopted _____, 2003.

Catherine L. Hanaway, Speaker